commercial banks, freedom to the banks regarding maximum permissible bank finance for working capital requirement, more freedom in regard to stipulation of margins, investment in shares/debentures and loan against shares. Regarding investment risks, banks have been advised to put in place asset liability management system, and to prepare detailed resource management plans. Special focus is being placed on qualitative aspects like asset laibility structure and risk perceptions.

Decision Regarding winding up of Schemes/Projects being Implemented by Ministries

681. SHRI VEDPARKASH P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Govenment have decided to wind up 216 schemes and projects being implemented by various Ministries in order to enforce fiscal discipline as reported in the Economic Times of 9th September, 1997;

(b) what factors have made 'approved' projects of different ministries suddenly redundant and non-essential;

(c) the reaction of the Power Ministry on dropping such important projects as investigation of small hydro-electric projects, particularly in hilly and tribal areas; and

(d) the international tourism development programmes that will be affected by this decision and the impact on forex earnings due to these steps?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) and (b) The identification of the scheme under different Ministries/Departments for weeding out was done on the basis of the exercise by a Committee constituted by the Ministry of Finance in consultation with the concerned Ministries/ Departments. Such of these schemes which were identified as no-longer necessary on account of different reasons such as redundancy, non-essentiality on grounds of the programmes having been completed work being transferred to State Government new programmes subsuming the existing activities under these scheme etc. have been including in the list of schemes to be weeded out.

(c) and (d) As stated above Ministry/ Department of Power and Tourism were also consulted in the identification of such schemes as in case of other Ministries. Wherever valid reasons for reconsideration have been furnished by the Ministries/Departments the cases are being reviewed. In the circumstances it would be seen that no adverse effects are likely to secure on account of this.

Liabilities on Account of Excise/Custom duties

682. SHRI VEDPARKASH P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government liabilities on account of excise and custom duties amounting to over Rs. 20,000 crores till March, 1996 were pending;

(b) its quantum upto March, 1997;

(c) the reasons for non-recovery;

(d) the urgent and effective steps Government have taken or are proposing to take to recover this huge amount along-with interest for the period of default;

(e) the dispute settling mechanism for expenditious decisions; and

(f) whether Government would penalise the defaulters?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) to (f) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.